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ABSTRACT

This document contains six modules designed for use in a training program for the improvement of teachers' classroom observation skills. Module One, "Introduction to Module on Improving Observation Skills," consists of line drawings used by the workshop leader to illustrate his explication of the intervention process. Module Two, "Improving Basic Observational Skills," introduces techniques for the improvement of anecdotal records of classroom and school events. Module Three, "Understanding a Situation," highlights factors that must always be attended to in order to minimize discrepancies in understanding. Module Four, "Filters, Foci, and Systematic Observation," deals with patterns as they focus attention on categories of actors and behaviors, and with the unconscious process of selectively filtering in or out certain kinds of information. Module Five, "Developing an Observational Schedule," explains the logic of schedule construction, to enable the learner to identify points at which intervention in behavior patterns can occur. Module Six, "Observation as a Continuing Process," examines learner problems and successes in the observation process and elaborates on the process of schedule development, construction, use, and evaluation. (MJB)

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Performance-Based Teacher Education Project
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A TRAINING PROGRAM IN IMPROVING OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

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Developed By

The Project in Ethnography in Education
State University of New York at Buffalo

USOE Grant #OEG-0702052725

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PBO 314

MODULE I

INTRODUCTION TO MODULE ON IMPROVING OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

Wayne D. Hughes, Allen G. Smith

The purpose of this brief module is to introduce the key concepts embodied in the various exercises of subsequent modules. Each concept has been illustrated using transparencies for overhead projection. The workshop leader will discuss each of these key concepts with you.

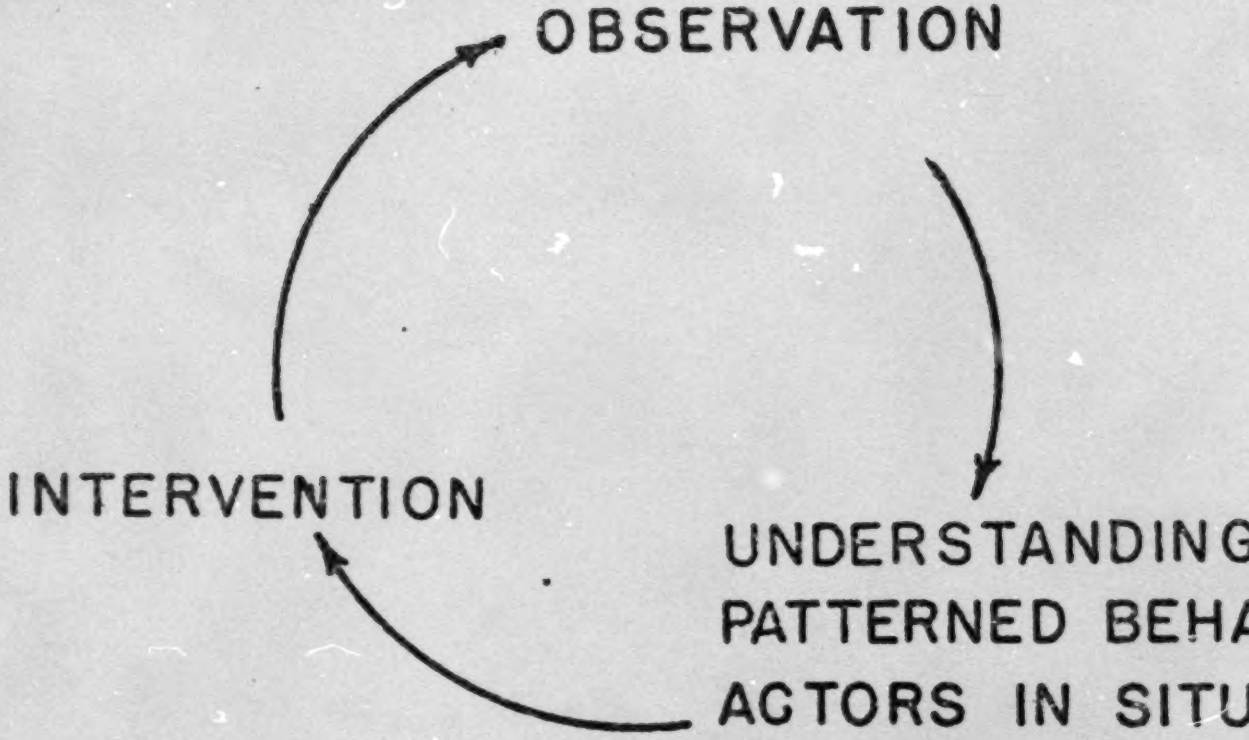
TOPICS CONTAINED IN MODULE I

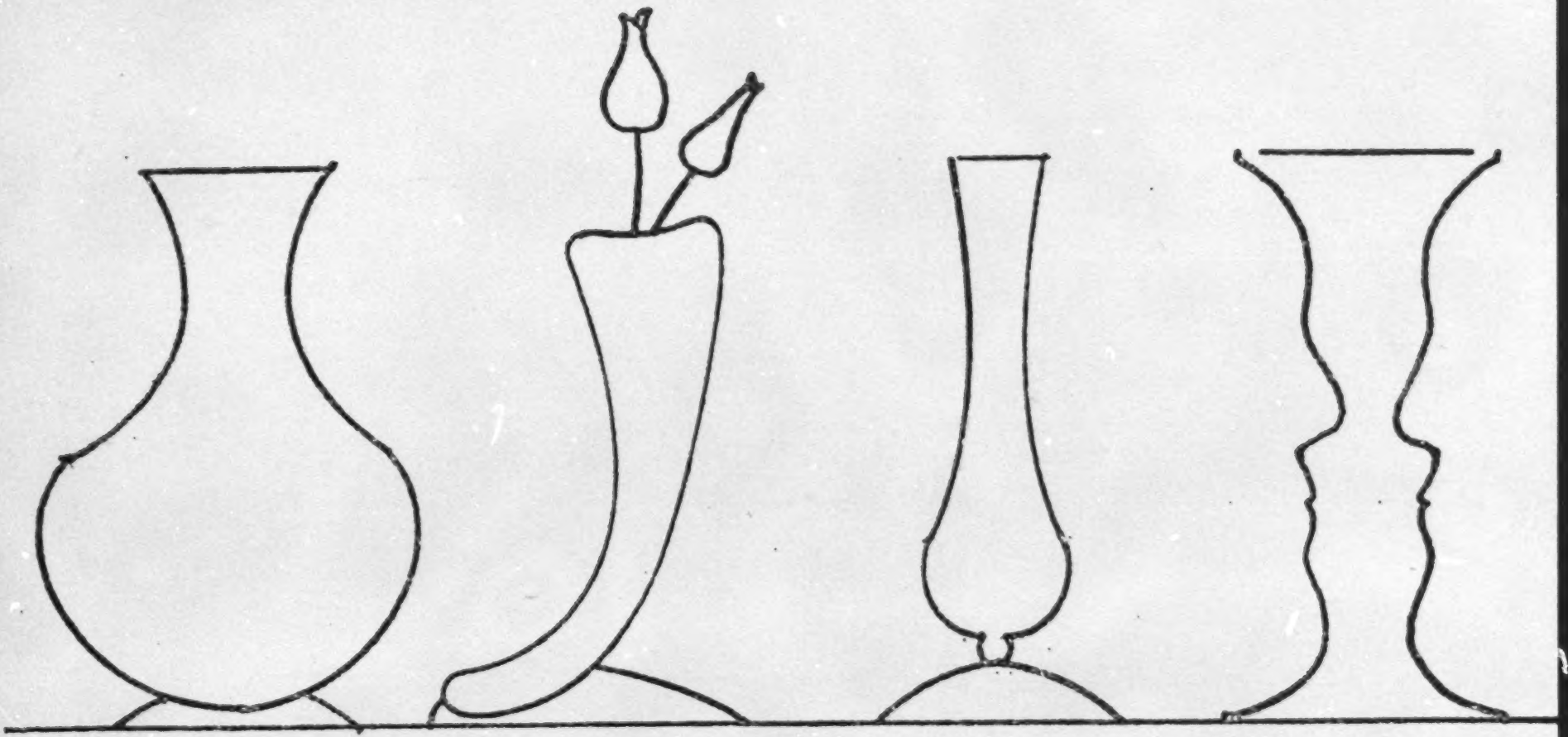
The Nature of Intervention	1.1
Intervention as an Ethnographic System	1.2
Patterned Behavior	
Situational Pattern vs. Perceptual Pattern	
The Ethnographic Process	1.3
Overview of the Workshop	1.4

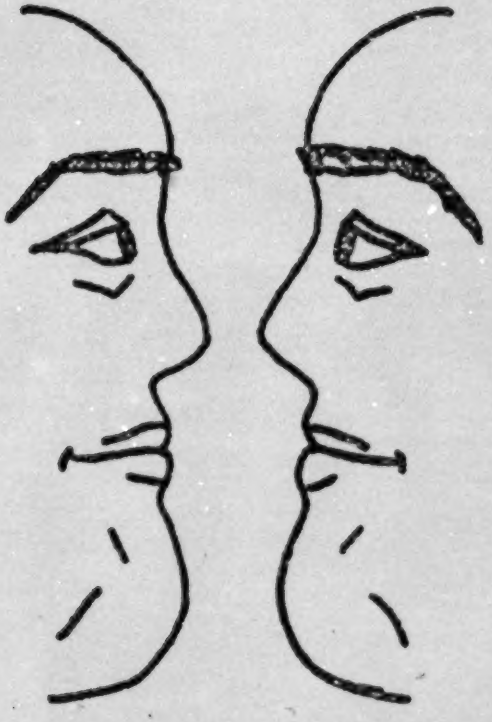
Included below are copies of most of the transparencies used in the discussion in this module. These will serve as useful references in the modules that follow. As each concept is discussed, make any explanatory notes that seem useful to you directly on the diagrams, thereby making the illustrations more useful to you when you may refer to them in the future.

OBSERVATION → UNDERSTANDING → INTERVENTION

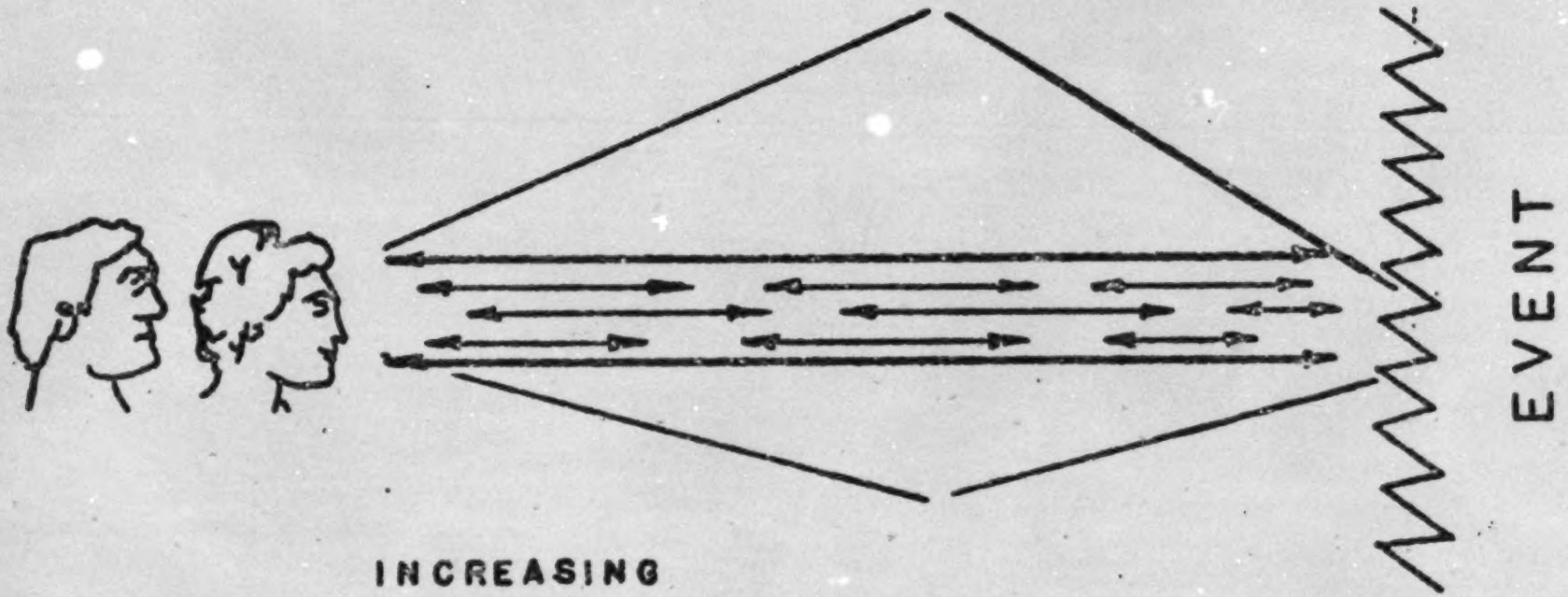
PATTERNED BEHAVIOR OF
ACTORS IN SITUATIONS


OBSERVATION
INTERVENTION
UNDERSTANDING
PATTERNED BEHAVIOR OF
ACTORS IN SITUATIONS





THE ETHNOGRAPHIC PROCESS



INCREASING UNDERSTANDING OF TOTAL EVENT

INCREASING FOCUS ON PARTICULAR INTEREST

MODULE II

IMPROVING BASIC OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

Wayne D. Hughes and Debra Feldman

The purpose of this module is to introduce you to some techniques for improving your anecdotal records of school and classroom events. Included are experiences aimed at increasing the completeness and clarity with which you describe. The information that you record during this module will be utilized in a variety of exercises in subsequent modules.

TOPICS IN MODULE I

Mapping An Observation Setting	1.1
Making An Observational Record	1.2
Expanding The Observation Record	1.3
Sorting And Editing The Record	1.4
Group Exercises: Further Inquiry About The Observation	1.5
Conclusion	1.6

1.1 Mapping An Observational Setting

The task of making a "complete" anecdotal record requires that each diary include a map of the situation you are observing. Each map must include: 1) all the

actors, labeled in some fashion, 2) important objects or areas which might be mentioned in the narrative (blackboard, front of room, etc.), 3) a general outline or sketch of the physical setting where the action takes place, and 4) a key explicating any symbols used in the diagram.

In addition to nsuring the presence of added information in your anecdotal record, the mapping procedure provides you with an opportunity to gain a general impression of what is happening, before you actually begin to make a written record of events.

Mapping Exercise

In preparation for making an anecdotal record of a filmed event, preview approximately five minutes of the film. On the enclosed observational record sheet draw a simple map indicating the various actors involved, physical features of the setting and the spatial relationships among actors and between the actors and the setting.

1.2 Making An Observational Record

In the context of this workshop, and in the broader realm of real life observation and decision making, it is often important for you to produce an accurate written account of what you observe. A written description provides a permanent record of information to which you can regularly refer for clarification and support of the inquiries or conclusions you make about behavior.

In addition the process of regularly collecting comprehensive information about events permits a re-examination of this information across a broad time perspective. This re-examination often produces insights not generally attained by spontaneously reacting to an event that has just occurred.

For decision making or intervention purposes a general rule is: If it is not written down it did not happen. This rule has emerged from the experiences of many people who consistently have found that as an event moves further into the past they cannot recall crucial details which allow true understanding of an event. With this axiom as a guiding principle it behooves the observer to make his observations as complete, as accurate, and as precise as possible.

In addition to mapping the observational setting the observer should make his observational record according to five simple rules:

Rule #1 Record as much as you can about the entire situation, to include the actors, their behaviors, the context, and the setting of those behaviors.

Rule #2 Record to the greatest extent possible your personal reflections on the event, including questions, comments, explanations, judgements, and conclusions.

Rule #3 Keep your factual descriptions separate from your personal reflection

Rule #4 Immediately after you have finished observing expand your record to include as much detail with as much clarity as possible.

Rule #5 Review your observational record within 24 hours of its recording to make final editing or factual changes before closing out that record.

Each of these observational rules are elaborated in the exercises that follow.

A. Observational Exercise - View once again the filmed event used in the mapping exercise. This time follow Observational Rules 1 through 3, and make a written record of the film. The film will show you events at a faster pace than you can write, so in order to record as much as possible (Rules 1 and 2) it will be necessary for you to adopt a "shorthand" notational system. Use the symbols you invented for the mapping exercise and add key words or phrases so that you will be reminded of who did what and in what context when you return to the record to elaborate and clarify your entries (Rule 4). For this observation you should leave enough space between your entries to allow for that elaboration and clarification.

In accordance with Rule 3 the Observational Record form (see sample below) consists of two columns. The left-hand or "narrative" column is for the factual description of what is occurring in a given scene. Here you record only what you directly observe. The events you describe in the narrative column will likely lead you to various inferences, questions, explanations and judgements. These kinds of responses should be immediately recorded or indicated in some fashion in the right-hand "notes" column. Keep in mind that in the rush to observe and record in detail you may not have time to keep things neat or well-sorted. After the observation you will be able to revise your record.

SAMPLE OBSERVATION RECORD

Narrative	Notes
T points board - answer?	T indirect
Kids, shout, wave -T-sh	
Girl - "1 at time"	role-playing
T-"good idea"	approval

B. Exercise - Expanding The Observation Record

As per Rule #4 you should now reread both columns of your observation record and fill in all the details you remember but were not able to write down during the observation itself. Your shorthand notes should serve to help you recall the details of the events which you quickly noted, so that you can record those events with maximum clarity. Included below is an expanded observation record produced from the sample observation record shown earlier.

SAMPLE EXPANDED OBSERVATION RECORD

Narrative	Notes
T points board - answer?* Teacher walks to board at center and points to word problem. She asks "who knows the answer to this?"	T indirect Teacher doesn't direct question --encourages
Kids, shout, wave -T-sh Several kids wave hands, shout "I do" Teacher puts finger to lips and says "shh"	
Girl - "1 at time" Girl in yellow shirt: "one at a time, don't shout"	Role Playing Girl takes teacher's role
T-"good idea" Teacher: "That's a good idea. I can see your hands without your shouting."	Approval Teacher shows approval of role girl took

*Original notations are underlined

C. Exercise - Sorting And Editing The Record

Often observation records are reviewed only infrequently; typical occassions are annual reviews of credentials for students entering a class, preparation for parent-teacher or parent-administrator conferences and provision of diagnostic services for remedial efforts, such as psychological services or specialized reading. Even a teacher, administrator, or researcher who is making frequent records may not refer back to a particular record until several weeks have passed. During the period that intervenes between the making and the utilization of an observational record, your memory may often play many tricks of omission and distortion. Because of this the axiom for observational recording is: If it is not written down, it did not happen.

Observational Rule 5 is a direct product of the axiom. You must close out your written record within 24 hours of having made an observation, but in order

to be certain that that record will be maximally useful at some future date you must be certain that it is a clear, precise and complete record. The exercise is designed to acquaint you with some techniques for ensuring the quality and usefulness of your record.

Sort and edit your observational record according to the following instructions

Instructions for Sorting and Editing

A. Sorting Personal Reflections From Description - Within 24 hours of the initial observation, re-examine your observation record and reorganize any misplaced statements or phrases according to the following guidelines.

(1) If the narrative column contains explanations of behaviors, cross them out and move them over to the notes column. Specifically, watch out for the following kinds of statements:

(a) Statements attributing motives or purposes to actors

EXAMPLE:

Narrative	Notes
Several children volunteer to do the problem (to win teacher's approval) →	

That the children respond to gain approval is a motive inferred by the observer and belongs in the notes column.

(b) Judgemental statements about actors

EXAMPLE:

Narrative	Notes
The [troublemaker] (OMIT) was sent to the back of the room. →	

"Troublemaker" is a judgement about what type of person engaged in some behaviors. However, the behaviors which lead to that judgement have been omitted and "Troublemaker" was used as a label for those behaviors. The judgement should be moved to the "Notes" column, and a description of what lead to that judgement: "the boy who struck the other" should be substituted for the judgemental label.

(c) Statements which attempt to link behavior to a cause

EXAMPLE:

Narrative	Notes
[The teacher's silence agitated the students] →	

This statement implies a cause and effect relationship between the teacher's behavior and the students' agitation. Since this is an inference of the observer it belongs in the notes column. The description might be phrased in more precise language as follows:

The teacher was silent; the students immediately began whispering & moving in their seats.	teacher agitated students

(2) If the narrative column contains any implied or explicit evaluations of behaviors observed, cross them out and place them in the Notes column.

EXAMPLE:

Narrative	Notes
T. [inappropriately] interrupts student in middle of answer	[teacher's interruption inappropriate]

rephrase to:

Any value-laden description such as "inappropriate" should be removed from the narrative and rephrased into a question or comment in Notes column.

(3) If an entry in the Notes column implies or contains description, it should be integrated into the narrative column.

EXAMPLE:

Narrative	Notes
T-all right,(to girl #2) tell us all what you think the story means (the teacher turns away from girl #2) Girl #2-the story is showing that you shouldn't be too lazy	[T's turning away] gives impression of discounting answer

The observer's inference about the teacher implies specific behavior

not described in the narrative. The narrative should include a sentence about the teacher's "turning away" before girl #2's statement.

B. Editing The Record

(1) Rephrase any unclear or imprecise language in the narrative. Below are some suggestions and examples.
Substitute specific nouns (the children, the teacher) for pronouns (they, he, she, it).

EXAMPLE:

[She] talked about [it].   Girl #2 the moral of the story

Substitute active for passive voice where necessary for clarification.

EXAMPLE:

Girl #2 talked about the story, [but was told to stop]   but the teacher told her to stop

Make incomplete sentences complete. Avoid using gerunds, nouns or subordinate phrases without a main verb.

EXAMPLE:

Girl #2 [talking] about the story. [Sudden interruption]   continues to talk The teacher interrupts girl #2 suddenly.

(2) Rephrase questions and comments in the Notes column to make them as specific as possible.

EXAMPLE:

Narrative	Notes
T. turns away from Girl #2 as she begins to answer. Girl #2: The story is showing that you shouldn't be too lazy....	[Why does teacher do this?] Does the teacher turn away consistently from girl #2 or from others while answering? (or) What effect does turning away from child who is giving answer have on child?

1.3 Group Exercises: Further Inquiry About The Observation

While the narrative column contains your best efforts at describing an event, your Notes column represents your best efforts at understanding that same event. The questions, explanations, and judgements that you record provide a yardstick that permits you to compare your understanding of this event with the realities of your next observation. Largely your cues for what to do next in an observation of the same situation come from questions in your Notes column or from apparent discrepancies between your understandings as listed in the Notes column and the behavior that you observe.

This exercise provides an opportunity for you to compare your narrative and notes entries with those of several other participants. If new questions or insights about the scene you observed arise during your participation in this group exercise, enter them in your Notes column. Do not make additional entries in the Narrative column at this point.

A. Instructions For Exercise

(1) Form a group with three or four other participants. Select a recorder, then, working from your observation record and together with the others in your group produce a written consensus observational record. Include only those behavioral descriptions, explanations, and comments for which there is strong agreement among your group's members. Where disagreements occur among group members, enter the discrepancies in your own original Notes column as questions.

(2) Reconvene as a large group and compare consensus reports. Once again note any discrepancies as questions in your own observations record.

(3) View the filmed event once again. Wherever possible, try to answer the questions contained in your Notes column.

1.4 Conclusion

In Module II you have been exposed to the basic skills involved in recording observations, to perfect those skills you must practice.

The group exercises that you just completed should have demonstrated to you that when two people view the same situation, they do not agree about what they saw. This disagreement is a lack of mutual understanding and the methods for reducing such misunderstanding is the topic for Module III.

Before The Next Session: Make an observation of an educational setting of your choice, and prepare a written record of that observation following the five (5) rules discussed earlier.

OBSERVATION RECORD FORM

Narrative	Notes

OBSERVATION RECORD FORM

Narrative	Notes

MODULE III

UNDERSTANDING A SITUATION

B. Allan Tindall

Your experiences in Session II demonstrated that people observing the same situation do not always agree about what occurred. Another way to discuss disagreement is to speak of discrepant understandings of what occurred. In this session you will first examine one another's records of the outside observation and then analyze a situation to discover what factors always need to be attended to in order to minimize discrepancies in understanding.

For this session a written description of a behavioral sequence has been provided to help you see that a knowledge of behaviors alone cannot lead to understanding. Only when the actors, setting and contexts for behaviors are known is understanding possible. This written description of behavior will provide the basis for a number of group experiences designed to demonstrate the truth value of the above statement.

TOPICS IN MODULE III

Behavioral Description	3.1
Alternative Understandings	3.2
The Situation	3.3
Plausibility Game	3.4
Conclusion	3.5

Exercise - Examination of Sorting and Editing

Exchange with another person your observation record made since the last session. Jointly critique the records in light of the guidelines for sorting and editing presented in Module II.

3.1 BEHAVIORAL DESCRIPTION

Below is a description of a sequence of behaviors which actually occurred. Read this description carefully to familiarize yourself with the sequence of events.

SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL DESCRIPTION

"Darkhair" blocks "longhair's" right arm punch with left arm, then punches at "longhair" with right arm. As this last punch occurs "darkhair" moves toward longhair, reducing the distance between the two to about six inches.

Both parties punch at and shove each other. "Longhair" moves (but cause is unknown) backward and around 180° to right. "Longhair" moves back to left and swings right arm to punch "darkhair." "Darkhair" blocks that punch with left arm.

"Longhair" manages to push "darkhair" backward and downward without any punches being landed.

A third party moves in to separate the actors and blocks the view of their behavior. During this time some behaviors continue to occur between "longhair' and "darkhair" causing "darkhair" to move from visibility to the left of the third party to nonvisibility, and "longhair" to move from nonvisibility to visibility to the right of the third party. During this time the third party remains stationary.

Both "darkhair" and "longhair" emerge to the right of the third party holding on to each other. "Longhair" has left arm around "darkhair's" head, and "darkhair's" right arm is under "longhair's" left arm and across the latter's back. At this point only "longhair's" back and part of "darkhair's" right side can be seen.

The two parties continue to hold on to each other as described above. "Whiteshirt" appears and puts hands on "longhair" and "darkhair." (The view is obscured momentarily.)

The actors continue to hold onto each other; as they do so they move vertically up and down. "Whiteshirt" continues to have hands on both parties and moves them apart as they become disentangled. At this point two other people move into the scene and stand between "longhair" and "darkhair."

3.2 ALTERNATIVE UNDERSTANDINGS

(A) Below are four conclusions drawn from the above description, conclusions which made the described behaviors understandable to some people who have read the account. Read these understandings, then assemble in small groups of 3 to 5 people to discuss the plausibility of these conclusions.

Determine as a group whether all four conclusions are equally plausible. If not, rank the conclusions from most plausible to least and explain briefly the reasons for your ranking. Select a recorder to write down this information so that it can later be shared with the other small groups.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE BEHAVIORAL DESCRIPTION

1. This was a professional wrestling match which got out of control. Something must have gone wrong so that instead of wrestling, the two guys started pushing and hitting each other. Finally the referee and the handlers had to step in and break it up.

2. This was a play put on by a fourth grade boy and girl depicting their interpretation of a family fight. In this play there were six people: the mother, the father, and four children. When the children saw what was happening in their family they stepped in to break up the fight.

3. This was a karate contest involving two high school boys. Everything was going fine with the punching and blocking until the referee stepped in to separate the contestants. At that point the two contestants got carried away and their friends had to help the referee separate them.

4. This is a fight that occurred in a classroom. Two boys got into a shoving match and ended up hitting each other. As soon as their teachers saw what was going on they stepped in to break it up.

3.3 THE SITUATION

Now you will see a filmed record of the described behaviors as they were enacted in a situation. The situationalizing of the behaviors adds new dimensions to the behaviors: the actors, the context of the behavior, and the setting of the behavior. Your workshop leader will indicate where the described behaviors begin and end.

There are two important points to be made about your experiences with this film.

(1) The description of behavior was not wrong in any respect, but it was incomplete. That incompleteness allowed you to ascribe additional factors to the sequence of events so that those described events became understandable to you. Complete and accurate descriptions are the only way to have information conveyed so that no misunderstandings result.

(2) Behaviors don't tell a complete story. You need to include a description of the actors, the context and the setting before behavior becomes understandable. Complete and accurate descriptions of actors, context, and setting, as well as behaviors, are the only safeguards against misunderstanding.

3.4 PLAUSIBILITY GAME

(A) Keeping in mind the need for complete description of actors, behaviors, contexts, and settings, return to your small group and collectively undertake a game in which you use some description of behavior to generate two plausible situations by varying the actors, the contexts, and the settings. Using any brief behavioral description write one humorous and one serious situational description. Select a recorder to provide a written record of the situations that you devise. A form has been included for this purpose.

For example, using the brief description - 8 people are climbing on top of one another - it is possible to generate a number of plausible situations which are understandable by varying the actors, settings, and contexts.

Actors	Context	Setting
8 fraternity brothers	breaking a record	phone booth
4 six grade boys & 4 six grade girls	building a pyramid	gymnasium
2 boys & 6 girls	pretending to be logs	kindergarten class
8 high school boys	after a fumble	football field

(B) Reconvene as a large group and share the variety of situations decided upon which make the behavior understandable.

PLAUSIBILITY RECORDING FORM

Behavioral Description

Serious Situation

Actors Context Setting

Humorous Situation

Actors Context Setting

3.5 CONCLUSION

Session II demonstrated that when two or more people observe the same situation they do not necessarily arrive at a common understanding. Session III has been designed to demonstrate that one significant reason for discrepant understandings is nonagreement about actors, contexts, and settings. There were two main points made during Session III: (1) that behaviors by themselves cannot lead to an understanding of a situation, and (2) understanding is arrived at only when actors, contexts, and settings are integrated with behavior.

When you make observations, either for your own purposes or to report to others, you must have detailed information about who the actors are, what they are doing, the physical setting of their actions, and the context in which the behaviors occurred. In summary, you must observe and record the complexity of behavior. As you make observations you can check to be sure that you are including the four essential components of any situation.

Before the Next Session make an observation of some situation in your school. Be sure that you observe the five (5) rules for observation discussed in Module II. In Module IV you will use these diaries as a basis for understanding how to develop observational foci.

MODULE IV

FILTERS, FOCI, AND SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION

Allen G. Smith

Module II pointed out that when two people observe the same situation they do not always arrive at the same understandings of those situations. Module III suggested that discrepant understandings were caused by difference in people's attention or inattention to the complexity of a situation; the actors, the behaviors, the context and the setting. Module IV will deal with patterns as they focus attention on categories of actors and behaviors, and with the unconscious process of selectively filtering in or out certain kinds of information.

None of us can observe everything all of the time; our brains would be unable to handle the fantastic overload that such a task would impose. We are always selectively attentive to some things, while ignoring others. When this observational selectivity is done unconsciously, we call it filtering. When, however, we are being selectively attentive or inattentive both consciously and deliberately, that we call focused observation.

Whenever we observe we must realize that we may be attending to certain categories of behavior or actors while ignoring others. As a result we must always ask: "Am I doing this consciously, because those actors or behaviors are critical to my curiosity, or because of unconscious observational habits?" The former is essential as we pursue understanding; the latter causes distortion in our observations.

This session will be devoted to exploring the effect of various filters upon our observations and conclusions. We will do this by analyzing the diaries you have already made, and by viewing several films.

In the first portion of this module you will explore filters and foci dealing with categories of actors and behaviors as they are part of a situation. The second portion will deal with conclusions which are derived from things which are not observably part of a situation. Both of these sections are designed to make one point:

> In order to make judgements you must understand, and in order for your observations to lead you to maximal understandings, you must carefully control the categories of actor, behavior, context and setting that you observe.

TOPICS CONTAINED IN MODULE IV

Perceptual Filters Categories of Behavior Categories of Actor Refining the Focus	4.1
Intra Situational filters vs. Extra Situational filters	4.2
Conclusions	4.3

4.1 PERCEPTUAL FILTERS AND FOCI

VERBAL AND NONVERBAL BEHAVIORS AS FILTERS AND FOCI

In these exercises you will look at your own diaries, and then do focused observations on those categories of behavior to which you were least attentive when you observed in the past. By focusing on these least observed behaviors you will better understand what information you miss if you are not careful in consciously selecting your foci. A lack of information has a dramatic influence on the inferences and conclusions (i.e. understanding) you have after observing.

Two broad categories of behavior are verbal and nonverbal. We will examine these first, and then try to observe using finer foci.

EXERCISE - IDENTIFYING PATTERNS OF FILTERING

Using the form below examine the diaries that you made inside and outside of the workshop to see the extent to which you filtered your entries as to verbal or nonverbal behavior. In general, did you seem to attend to and record more verbal behavior (what people were saying) than nonverbal (what people were doing with their bodies)? Or, did you attend more to the nonverbal behaviors?

(A) CODING VERBAL AND NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR

Instructions: For each behavioral sequence which is discrete in each of your diaries put a "tally mark" (/) each time you recorded verbal or nonverbal behavior. For any sequence you may have one or two tallies.

	Verbal Behavior	Nonverbal Behavior
Film Diary		

Outside Workshop Diary		

(1) Analysis: What behaviors did you filter out?

Number of verbal entries in film diary _____.
Number of verbal entries in Outside diary _____.
Total number of verbal entries _____.

Number of non-verbal entries in film diary _____.
Number of non-verbal entries in Outside diary _____.
Total number of nonverbal entries _____.

To answer the above question compare the totals. The lowest total suggests that across two observational situations you filtered out that particular type of information. This is an example of an unconscious perceptual pattern which must be controlled if understanding is to be achieved.

(2) Using the "Focused Observation I" form, observe several minutes of the filmed behavior while making a preliminary map of the setting. Designate each actor with some form of notation. Now observe 10 more minutes of the film, focusing upon that category of behavior which you previously filtered out the most (the one with the lowest total). If you previously paid the most attention to verbal behavior in the film and Outside diary then you should now focus on nonverbal behavior.

FOCUSED OBSERVATION I

FOCUS _____

NARRATIVE	NOTES

FOCUSED OBSERVATION I

FOCUS _____

NARRATIVE	NOTES

If you were most attentive to nonverbal behaviors, you should now focus on verbal behavior.

Record only rough notes on the form, but be sure to continue to make individual reflections in the "Notes" Column.

(3) Break into small groups with others who shared your focus. Working as a group:

(a) Make a list of those behaviors that the members of your group agree that they observed relevant to your focus.

(b) Expand the group's list by adding as many other behaviors as possible that fall within your group's focus.

(c) Arrange the behaviors in broad categories such that each broad category of behavior includes several sub-categories.

For example: If your focus had been nonverbal behavior your category system may have entries such as:

Sample Category System

Use of space

turning away
turning toward
seated within 6" proximity
_____
_____
_____
etc.

Facial Expressions

smile
yawn
frown
stick tongue out
_____
_____
_____
etc.

Paying Attention

_____
_____
_____
etc.

As you discuss your categorization you will find that you may not agree on what behaviors constitute a category like "Paying Attention." That is because "paying attention" is not a description of behavior but a conclusion about some behavior. It is possible to use "paying attention" as a descriptor for behavior only if you provide a behavioral definition for the category that can be agreed upon by your group members. Any definition must be written with two rules in mind: (1) it must be precise, and (2) it must be discrete. Precision insures that anyone viewing a behavior included in the definition will not hesitate to recognize that behavior as "paying attention." Discreteness insures that one behavior can only be described by one label. For example if you sub-categorized nonverbal behaviors into "attentive," "inattentive," and "sleeping" behaviors you would be hard pressed to accurately decide when a "sleeping" behavior was not an "inattentive" behavior. In other words your categories must be discrete to the point that any behavior can be coded or assigned into only one category of behavior.

(d) Turn to the observation record that you made in the last session. Did the focused observation suggest changes or additions to questions, inferences, or conclusions in your NOTES column? Make whatever additions you wish in either the NOTES or NARRATIVE columns. Don't erase what was already there, simply make additions. If the addition marks a change from an earlier entry, note that but keep the earlier entry.

(4) Return to the large group and: (1) report any insights which came from the small group discussions, and (2) describe the category system that your group developed.

(B) CATEGORIES OF ACTORS AS FILTERS AND FOCI

Probably the most common filter that we all use when observing a class is to attend principally to what the teacher says and does. To rephrase this in the jargon of these workshops, we have used a filter which caused us to selectively attend to one category of actors (teachers). In any class however, there are innumerable categories of actors: there are "boys and girls," "blacks and whites," "smart kids and dumb kids," "troublemakers and good citizens," etc. In this exercise we will construct a category system of types of actors.

(1) Working individually review your observation records of the filmed classroom and make a list of the various ways in which

you designated students. Your list may look something like the following example:

boy
girl
black boy
tall boy
quiet girl
etc.

Count the number of times that you referred to boys and the number that you referred to girls. Note for yourself which category (boys or girls) was referred to least often.

(2) View both classroom films once again. This time focus only on either boys or girls, selecting whichever you concentrated on the least in your earlier observations. As you observe, do not make a full observation record; instead make a list of the various categories of boys or girls that you see.

(3) Working as a total group make a composite list of all the various categories of boys and girls identified by the group members.

(4) Arrange these various categories into a category system in which there are broad categories subdivided into increasingly precise sub categories.

Discussion

Often the behavior of a particular individual can be described but cannot be understood without comparing it to the behavior of similar persons in the same context and setting. Thinking of categories of actors, and observing their behaviors can provide this basis for comparison.

As you proceed to make observations in your own professional setting you will find it useful to similarly examine categories of setting and of context. Behaviors often change dramatically in response to alterations in the physical environment or to changes in the agendas of the actors. Thus talking loudly in the library draws different behavioral responses from individuals than does talking loudly in a school cafeteria. Likewise a person's verbal and nonverbal behaviors when presenting an argument are quite different from those enacted when answering a question.

(C) EXERCISE - REFINING THE FOCUS

The essence of effective and efficient observation is being able to refine your focus carefully and intelligently, always being guided by your desire to understand a situation or solve a problem. Module V is specifically directed toward this end. In that Module you

will be introduced to the schedule, which is nothing more than a highly refined and precisely defined focus for observation.

This exercise will give you some practice in refining your focus; a prerequisite for developing a "schedule."

You have seen two different classroom films of the filmed class at least twice. For this exercise review your written records of those films and:

(1) Select either a question which interests you, or a conclusion which you would like to re-examine.

(2) Using your imagination and notes from the earlier small group and large group discussions, select sub-categories of actors and behaviors which are relevant to pursuing your question or to re-examining one of your conclusions. During the selection of categories be sure that you apply the rules of precision and discreteness to those categories. If you adopt category systems which have written definitions use those definitions, if not you must write out definitions for the categories you select. Re-observe a classroom film using those categories as foci. Record your notes on the "Focused Observation II" form.

(3) Assemble in small groups to discuss the insights or answers you were able to obtain by focusing on some discrete categories of behavior. Share your categories and definitions.

4.2 INTRASITUATIONAL FILTERS AND FOCI VERSUS EXTRASITUATIONAL FILTERS AND FOCI

All of the filters and foci that we have been concerned with thus far have been intrasituational in nature, that is they have dealt with categories of actors and behaviors which were observably present in the situation. The group of filters and foci to which we will now turn are of a different sort. Rather than intrasituational they are extrasituational.

Extrasituational filters are premises or assumptions about why certain things occur the way they do. But the behaviors which lead to verifying those assumptions are not directly observable in the situation. For the most part extrasituational filters deal with the psychological states of the actors you are observing; their motivations, intellectual capacities, and predispositions. However, they may also deal with cultural premises; notions held by groups of people that cause them to think or act in certain patterned ways.

This section deals with the problem of understanding a situation when the observer filters information according to extrasituational factors. To do this we will focus on causes you have previously ascribed to behaviors you have observed.

FOCUSED OBSERVATION II

FOCUS _____

NARRATIVE	NOTES

ASCRIBED CAUSE AS AN EXTRASITUATIONAL FILTER AND FOCUS

For this exercise review all of your written records of the filmed class, and outside class observations. Focus your attention on the entries in your "Notes" column, and ask: (1) Did I note any causal relationships in my "Notes" column?, and (2) For any causal relationship did I ascribe extra or intrasituational causes?

(A) Read through the "Notes" column in all of your classroom film records, and the record of your Outside observation. For each entry which suggests a causal relationship code the entry as intra or extrasituational on the "Ascribed Cause Coding" form.

For causes to be coded into the intrasituational category, they must deal with items which you observed - that is, behaviors which you recorded in your "Narrative" column, according to the axiom of observation presented in Module II.

For causes to be coded into the extrasituational category they must refer to things which are not observable - wants, needs, thoughts, intelligence, etc.

ASCRIBED CAUSE CODING

	Extrasituational	Intrasituational
Classroom films		
Outside Diaries		

Analysis: What causal filter were you using?

Number of extrasituational causes:

Classroom Films _____

Outside Diaries _____

Total _____

Number of Intrasituational causes:

Classroom Films	_____
Outside Diaries	_____
Total	_____

To answer the above question compare the totals. The highest total suggests the type of explanation for behavior that you relied upon most across two observational situations. This is an example of an unconscious perceptual pattern which must be controlled if understanding is to be achieved.

If you have extra information about the actors due to previous observation or interaction with them or through the results of some testing experience then obviously we don't suggest that you ignore it. Instead the point is not to stop concluding about peoples thoughts, or intellectual abilities, but rather to familiarize you with the hazards of making extrasituational judgements without a well documented description of the way someone has behaved in one or more situations, as these situations have been comprised of other actors, behaviors, contexts, and settings. Our tendency as humans is to explain our own behavior in terms of the circumstances in which it occurs but to explain the behavior of others in terms of tendencies of those individuals.

This workshop is based on methods for deriving understanding through observation. What you observe systematically can lead you to make excellent judgements, but what you understand as a result of random nonconscious observations may lead to erroneous or potentially hazardous judgements.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Module IV has been designed to point out how observations become skewed by not controlling the foci we use to observe. You have participated in the design of category systems for the examination of actors and behaviors, and have applied techniques for sharpening your focus on particular types of information relevant to a question. What you really have identified are possible variables present in your own professional setting. When you make observations in your school, it will be useful to examine the data that you collect in terms of these variables as a means of raising questions, generating insights and directing further observations.

Module V will prepare you to collect this kind of information very efficiently in your own school through the use of observation schedules. In preparation for the exercises of the next session read carefully the Example of the logic of schedule construction and the guidelines for schedule construction contained in Module V. Time will be provided for the discussion of this material at the beginning of the next session.

MODULE V

DEVELOPING AN OBSERVATIONAL SCHEDULE

Thomas G. Carroll

In this session you will draw on your previous training in distinguishing between situational and non-situational explanations for behavior, and your ability to break questions down into variables which are classes of actor, behavior, context and setting. Questions about problems in your school situation can best be examined as patterns of relationship between actors, behaviors, context and setting within your situation. To successfully intervene in a problem you must understand the relationship of those variables. You can't hope to change an entire complex of interrelated variables all at once, but you can cause change to occur incrementally by altering the patterns of relationship among specific variables.

The method of scheduling explained in this module will provide you with a means for making very focused observations of patterned relationships. It will allow you to identify discrete points at which intervention in a pattern can occur.

This module provides an example of schedule development which depicts the logic of schedule construction. The example is followed by guidelines for schedule construction. You will have the opportunity to develop and use a schedule in class, followed by the development of your own schedule.

TOPICS IN MODULE V

The Logic Of Schedule Construction	5.1
Guidelines For Schedule Construction	5.2
Developing An Observational Schedule	5.3
Conclusion	5.4

5.1 The Logic Of Schedule Construction

Below is an example of the construction and development of a schedule designed to answer a particular question. This example is provided so that you can refer back to it as the logics are developed and guidelines for schedule construction are presented.

NOTE: The examples used in this module have been developed by the Project In Ethnography In Education. They are illustrative only and do not necessarily express the actual behavior of the teacher depicted.

Example Of Schedule Construction

The teacher in the classroom film that you observed was concerned with the frequency of fights in his room. He decided to focus his attention on the behavior that seemed most related to these fights. Most fights occured in "free periods' in which the children had a chance to work on their own assignments and move around the room. The context of his observation would thus be confined to "free time". His observation was further focused on those behaviors that his experience indicated were most closely related to fight. He defined these behaviors as follows:

Provoke: anytime one person physically or verbally interrupts the ongoing behavior of another person and then avoids continued interaction (for example, the provoker runs away after pushing someone).

Disturb: anytime one person physically or verbally interrupts the ongoing behavior of another person and then continues to engage in behaviors with this person that are different from the original activities of the person (for example, person two is reading a magazine, person one asks person two a question about football, persons one and two then engage in a conversation about basketball).

Ignore/Reject: to show no response to potential disturbance or provocation or to verbally or physically reject it followed by a continuation of the original behavior (for example, person two is reading a magazine, person one asks a question about football, person two says "I'll talk to you later", then continues to read).

Fool around: in response to another's attempt to stop an activity, the person joins the other in non-work activity.

Retaliate: in response to another's attempt to stop an activity, the person engages in an action which stops the interrupter from further action by an intervention in his or her behavior (i.e., person two delivers a punch in the stomach or tells the teacher).

Thus far the teacher has focused his observation on a context (free period) and setting (the classroom) and has operationally defined categories of behavior which are of concern. In order to make a record of the behaviors to be observed he constructed a frequency chart which looked like this:

SAMPLE FREQUENCY CHART

Behavior	Frequency	Total
Disturb		
Provoke		
Ignore/Reject		
Fool Around		
Retaliate		

Note that the left hand column contains a list of categories of behavior, while the remainder of the chart is used to enter data regarding the frequency of occurrence of each category of behavior. For the remainder of this module, these two sections will be referred to as the "category" section and the "coding" section.

Below is the same chart containing the frequency information collected by the teacher in a 10-minute observation.

SAMPLE FREQUENCY CHART

Behavior	Frequency	Total
Disturb	///////	7
Provoke	////	4
Ignore/Reject	////	4
Fool Around	/////	5
Retaliate	//	2

The teacher now had a picture of which behaviors were most or least frequent, but he was unable to decide how best to intervene because the frequency chart did not show the relationship of the behavior of one actor to the behavior of another actor.

To gain this additional information he first added vertical divisions to the "coding" section and set for himself the following rule: Each behavior would be recorded in a separate vertical column. Entries would be made by working from left to right one column at a time.

This procedure would enable him to determine the order in which behaviors preceded or followed one another.

The teacher also changed his coding signs from tally marks to the initials of the first name of each student. This permitted him to tell which students had performed which behavior in which sequence. The alteration of his coding system which allowed him to include the actors converted his information collecting device into a schedule. His schedule is illustrated below as it appeared after making a 10-minute observation of behavior in his classroom.

SAMPLE OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Behavior	Intervals of Occurrences of Behavior													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Disturb	J				M									
Provoke			J				B		J		J	I	B	
Ignore/Reject				M						C		C		
Fool Around		M				B		J						
Retaliate														C

The information coded in the schedule can be read as follows: (1) Jose disturbs (2) Mike who fools around with him, (3) Jose provokes (4) Mike who responds by ignoring Jose, (5) Mike disturbs (6) Barry who responds by fooling around, (7) Barry provokes (8) Jose who responds by fooling around, (9) Jose provokes (10) Craig who responds by ignoring Jose, (11) Jose provokes (12) Craig again, who again responds by ignoring Jose, (13) Barry provokes (14) Craig who responds by retaliating -- a fight broke out here.

This teacher used this schedule several times on different days and discovered the following patterns of behavior. 1. There was an "in group" and an "out group" fights did not occur between Jose, Mike and Barry but they did occur between those three and Craig and his friends. 2. Boys usually retaliated by fighting while

girls went to the teacher and asked him to stop someone from bothering them.

The teacher saw that boys would not come to him for intervention so he would have to take the initiative and intervene without a request. From the schedule he could see that he could limit his intervention to only those encounters that occurred between members of the "in groups" and "out groups" that he had discovered and he could further limit intervention to those times in which a provocative act was being ignored or rejected rather than turned into an occasion to fool around.

In this example you have seen that the process of schedule construction is one of sequential development and refinement. In general, schedules require time to develop and practice to use but are an excellent means of gaining insights into behavior in situations that are important to you.

5.2 Guidelines For Schedule Construction

In the examples the teacher was dealing with the four variables present in all situations: actors, behaviors, context and setting. To construct a schedule which would handle all of these variables simultaneously would require a very large, three dimensional coding form, and Superman as the observer. To make his task reasonable the teacher identified two constants: the setting (the physical classroom including the people present) and the context (the sense of "free time" as it is established in his class). The teacher now had to work with only two variables, actors and behaviors, and he managed these two variables by putting them into tabular form. The teacher followed some guidelines for developing a schedule:

Guideline #1

All schedules are designed and refined by virtue of some desire to understand what takes place within a situation. As schedules are developed they must answer questions about particular people and their actions as they contextually unfold in physical settings.

Guideline #2

Any schedule must hold at least two dimensions of a situation constant while attending systematically to the remaining two dimensions.

a. Holding the context and setting constant allows observation of the patterned relationships of actors and behaviors within the confines of that situation.
b. Holding the actors and behaviors constant allows observation of the patterned relationship between specific people and specific behaviors across contextual and setting boundries.
c. Holding the actors and the setting constant allows observation of the patterned relationship of all the behaviors of specific people, in the different contexts within the same physical setting.
d. Holding behaviors and the physical setting constant allows observation of the patterned relationship between who performs (actors) those behaviors in which context within that setting.
e. An observer is quite free to construct schedules which hold more than two

dimensions constant; his inventiveness informed by his questions and constrained by the limits of his ability are the only boundries.

Guideline #3

The development of categories of actors, behaviors, context and settings must follow the rules of precision and discreteness given in Module IV. Precision means clarity of definition, so that no one would have any difficulty in understanding your category system of actors, behaviors, contexts or settings. When category systems are discrete they represent only one class of phenomena. When using your category system there must be no chance that one behavior, actor, context or setting could be coded into more than one category. In order to insure precision and discreteness, you must operationally define, in writing, all of the categories and symbols you use on any schedule.

Guideline #4

Rule of Parsimony: It should be simple to use.

Each new category or symbol you introduce means a new decision you must make while observing and coding. The limit to the number of decisions you make is based on your experience with a schedule, but keep in mind that behavior is complex and occurs rapidly. The limits are real. It is better to make two or three schedules rather than to try to cram too much into one schedule.

Guideline #5

Schedules are designed to help you see patterns. Patterns exist as such only over time. In using a schedule you should make several observations which are short in duration. In a sense you are "sampling" to see if a pattern is a product of the moment or has duration.

5.3 Developing An Observational Schedule

A. Since the last session you have read the above example (5.1) and the Guidelines For Schedule Construction (5.2). Take this opportunity to discuss these sections with the other workshop participants and the group leader. The purpose of this discussion is to clarify any troublesome portions of the example or the Guidelines.

B. Exercise - Practice Coding Using An Observation Schedule

The teacher that you have been observing on film has been trying to use the inquiry method of instruction. In order to monitor the effects of this teaching strategy on verbalization in the classroom he developed this simple schedule to use while observing video tapes of his teaching.

Read the definitions for each behavior category carefully, then observe and code the discussion of the classroom film. Code each teacher's

verbalization with a "T" and each students verbalization with an "S", make only one entry per column.

SAMPLE OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Behavior	Intervals												Total
Question	S							T					T-1 S-1
Respond		T		S					S				T-1 S-2
Redirect			T			T				T			T-3 S-0
Initiation					T		T						T-s S-0

Definitions of behavior categories:

Question: any question by any individual.

Respond: any statement by any individual in response to a question or a Redirect.

Redirect: an attempt to have another individual make a statement related to the preceeding comment.

Initiation: assertion of fact or opinion without a preceeding redirect or question.

SCHEDULE FOR CODING FILMED DISCUSSION OF CLASSROOM FIGHT

Behavior	Intervals												Total
Question													
Respond													
Redirect													
Initiation													

Behavior	Intervals												Total
Question													
Respond													
Redirect													
Initiation													

Behavior	Intervals												Total
Question													
Respond													
Redirect													
Initiation													

C. Together with the total group of participants discuss the results obtained in the observation you just made. Write a joint statement that characterizes the teacher and the students in terms of the behavior on the schedule. Now, based upon your knowledge of schedules and your experience observing this classroom, jointly develop an observational schedule that will give you more detailed information useful in assessing the inquiry method used in the filmed classroom.

View the filmed discussion once again. This time code the behavior using the schedule that your group developed. After coding, compare your results with the other participants. Remember, accurate schedule useage requires practice so do not worry if your codings are not exactly the same as another participant's. Generally 85% agreement between two coders is considered very good.

D. Working individually or with several other similarly interested participants develop an observational schedule to address a question of your own regarding an educational situation in your own school. As soon as you have prepared a first draft of the schedule, discuss it with other participants and your group leader, often the comments of an "outside" critic are extremely useful. Be sure to use the five (5) Guidelines for Schedule Construction (5.2).

5.4 Conclusion

In order to intervene in any situation you must understand that situation. Situational understanding can be obtained by observational strategies, but only if you attend to the complexities of situations as they always involve actors, behaviors, contexts, and locations (Module III). Understanding also requires attending to the complexities of being precise and accurate about categories of those dimensions, as in Module IV. This module has been designed to acquaint you with some procedures which will help you cope with those complexities by systematically focusing on crucial components of a situation.

The logic of developing a schedule is informed by your questions. That logic is intimately involved with the Guidelines presented above. Now you are ready to begin to test out your own schedule.

Before the Next Session, use your schedule to make 3 or 4 short observations in your own educational setting. Between observations modify your schedule to make it increasingly useful to answering your curiosity. Time will be provided at the next meeting to share information regarding the schedules produced by yourself and the other participants.

MODULE VI

OBSERVATION AS A CONTINUING PROCESS

B. Allan Tindall

How can you do something about situations in your school setting that you think are in some way improper? Presumably you volunteered for this workshop to find an answer to that question. We think we have answered that question in a way that will be the most helpful to you in the long run. We have not supplied directives of an if-then type, nor have we said that any particular solution will fit any particular problem.

What we have done is to suggest how you can go about answering your own questions. We have outlined the process of systematic observation, a process that can lead you to understand how to identify and intervene in objectionable or educationally unsound practices. Our basic premise has been that you must understand before you can intervene, and that understanding can be obtained through observation.

We began by having you engage in some experiences which pointed out that when several people observed the same situation each understood what they had seen in a different way. A principal reason for their different understandings was a failure to consciously attend to each of the four dimensions of a situation to the same extent. In Module IV the complexities of a situation were elaborated, and you examined your own filters which unconsciously caused you to focus on some dimension of a situation more than on others. In that module you also observed, using carefully controlled and conscious foci, and categorized the various dimensions of a situation. In Module V you developed an observational schedule which would allow you to systematically focus your attention on some dimensions of a situation in a very precise manner.

You have now had an opportunity to try out, and refine, your observational schedule. In this session we will be talking about your problems and successes. We will elaborate on the process of schedule development and construction; we will suggest ways that you can check the efficiency of your observations, and ways to use schedules.

TOPICS IN MODULE VI

Discussion of Participants Schedules	6.1
Examples of Schedules	6.2
Self Assessment Procedures	6.3
The Use of Schedules	6.4

6.1 DISCUSSION OF PARTICIPANTS SCHEDULES

Together with your workshop leader, discuss the successes and problems you and other participants had in the use and refinement of your individual schedules. Specifically, attend to such things as: (1) the suitability of your schedule for your question, (2) the discreteness and precision of your categories, (3) the dimensions of the situation which you held constant, and (4) portions of the complexity of a situation which you need to include but were unable to.

6.2 EXAMPLES OF SCHEDULES

In Module V the Guidelines for schedule development were given, along with two examples of workable schedules. One of the central points conveyed in that module was that a schedule is a way to gather systematic information about selected dimensions of a situation. Guided by a question or a curiosity and the information and understandings you have up to any point you are free to design a schedule to meet your own needs. Your ingenuity and cleverness are the only constraints on developing schedules which conform to the Guidelines.

Below you will find a sequentially developed series of schedules; these are presented in order that you can see other alternatives. The workshop leader will discuss each example with you.

EXAMPLE 1

A studyhall teacher continually had "trouble" from one group of boys who always sat at the same table. They were too noisy, fooled around too much, etc. But the teacher wanted to know exactly what they were doing and to what extent they were doing those things. She constructed a frequency table containing the four behaviors listed below.

SAMPLE

Studying - either reading a book or paper, or writing

Talking - speaking with one or more others

Fooling Around - touching, pushing, hitting, hanging on, or other physical contact between two boys, either with or without talking

Walking Around - absence from proper seat, by moving from one place to another within the room

After she had observed the boys for 10 minutes she determined that they had engaged in the following kinds of behaviors, to the extent indicated.

SAMPLE

Behavior	Frequency	Total
studying	𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 || 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸	42
talking	𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸	25
fooling around	𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 |||	18
walking around	𝍸 𝍸 ||	12

You will note that the actors, the context and the sitting have been held constant, allowing only the behaviors to vary.

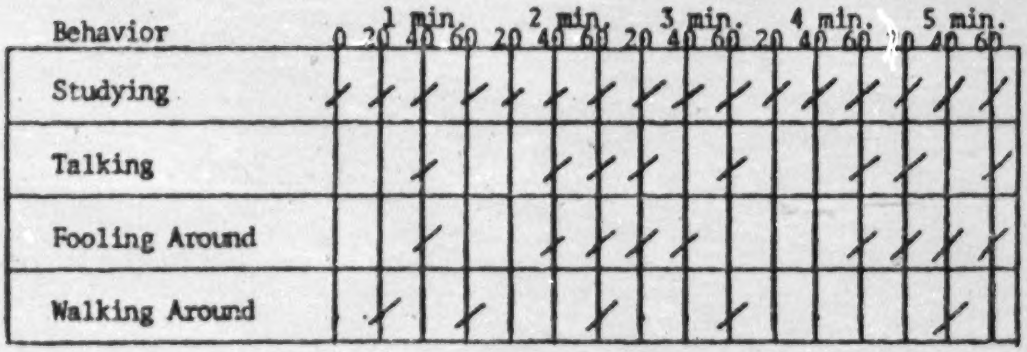
The teacher discovered a problem with this schedule; there was no way to tell which behaviors occurred together. Her coding problem was that she might check "walking around" when a boy got up to leave, but she could not decide if she wanted to make another check mark when he left to go to a third place. She also had trouble coding "talking as a discrete activity; she did not know how to code the fact that people pause during the same conversation. Each of her categories were hard

to use because the behaviors did not stop and start cleanly and clearly.

EXAMPLE 2

The teacher decided to use a "Time Sampling" technique to help her sort out what was happening at various points in time. She used the same actors, context and setting. She also used the same behavioral categories, but she coded them on a present or absent basis at 20 second intervals. Each time the second hand on her watch passed a 20 second mark she looked up to see what behaviors were occurring. If something occurred that was defined under one of the behavior categories at each interval, it was coded by putting a mark on the dividing line marked 20, 40, 60, 20, etc. At the end of 5 minutes her coding form looked like this.

SAMPLE



This method helped the teacher understand how behaviors were organized, one with another. Some one of the boys was always studying. Talking occurred at 1/2 of the intervals, and fooling around appeared to occur only when talking occurred. Walking around did not seem to be related to the other three behaviors. She was still dissatisfied with the schedule because it did not indicate accurately who was doing what. She had been surprised to discover that studying seemed to be the most frequent behavior, and wondered if she had been focusing on undersired behavior so much that the desirable behavior had not registered. She decided to question further to find out who was engaging in those particular behaviors. By knowing that, she would know how best to intervene.

EXAMPLE 3

Using the same setting and context she constructed this schedule to find out which boys were engaging in which behaviors. This schedule also was able to accomodate sequence and time, by using "Time Sampling" and entering the first initial, of the actors, as illustrated below.

SAMPLE

Behavior	Time 00	20	40	60	1 min. 20	40	60	2 min. 20	40	60	3 min. 20	40	60	4 min. 20	40	60	5 min. 20	40	60
Studying	r p	r	p	d	p r	p d	p d	p	p d	p d	r	p r		p r	p r	p r			
Talking	j d	j r	j r	r	j d			d r			d r	d	d r	d	d	d	d	d	d
Fooling Around	d d																d d	d d	
Walking		d				j													

r=Robert d=David j=James p=Peter

The above schedule tells a more complete story. Peter and Robert were the two boys studying, while David and James were the ones who usually were not studying. The story goes like this:

Time	Description
00	Peter and Robert studying; James and David talking and fooling around
20	David takes a walk; James talks to Peter; Robert studies
40	Peter does not sustain conversation, goes back to studying; James talks to Robert
60	Peter and Robert talk; James studies
20	David returns and talks with James; Peter and Robert study
etc.	

The teacher observed similar variations of this pattern over a one week period and decided that since David was the one who appeared to initiate the talking and fooling around she would leave Robert, Peter, and James together, and to try to find another table for David to sit at.

By investigating the situation and understanding it she did not have to criticize all 4 boys or even bring them to public attention. She simply discovered who was doing what, when those four boys were in study hall, and removed the one person who seemed to make a difference in the group's behavior.

6.3 SELF ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Throughout this workshop we have given you various rules and guidelines for observing. These are intended to be used as references for self assessment, to be used periodically as needed to make sure that your observations include the essential qualities of a good observational record.

RULES FOR OBSERVATION RECORDING

1. The observational setting should be mapped.
2. Record as much behavior as you can about the entire situation: actors, behaviors, context and location.
3. Record all of your personal reflections: include questions, comments, explanations, judgements and conclusions.
4. Keep your factual descriptions separate from your personal reflections.
5. Immediately after observing expand your record.
6. Within 24 hours make final editing or factual changes.

FILTERS OR FOCI

1. After any observation you can and should check to see if you are unconsciously focusing on some category of actor, behavior, context or setting.
2. Checking consists of designating categories and noting the frequency with which your record includes those categories.
3. If you identify an unconscious focus, set a strategy for obtaining the information that you have been unconsciously excluding.

RULES FOR CONSTRUCTING CATEGORIES

1. Each category must be precisely defined so that there is no question about what that category includes.
2. Each category must be discrete so that there is no possibility that one item can be coded into more than one category.
3. Each category must have a written description to ensure precision and discreteness.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHEDULE CONSTRUCTION

1. Schedules must be designed to enhance understanding regarding some question or curiosity.
2. Any schedule must hold at least two dimensions of a situation constant while attending systematically to the remaining dimensions.
3. A schedule should be simple to use.
4. Schedules can help you see patterns only if used repeatedly over time.

6.4 THE USE OF SCHEDULES

Questions or curiosities may be directed toward other people (your students) toward yourself, or to the relationship between you and your students. The actual manner in which schedules are used depends upon your curiosity.

Your workshop leader will now discuss with you various ways in which the nature of questions implies differences in the way you would use schedules. Included in this discussion will be: (1) the use of audio tapes, (2) video tapes, (3) third party usage of schedules, and (4) self use of schedules.